

Basheer Jones: Lifelong Commitment to Serving Cleveland and Accountability for Past Actions

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1. Remorse Statement from Basheer Jones

Your Honor,

I am here today not to make excuses but to take full responsibility for the wrong I've done. I understand the gravity of my actions, and I deeply regret the harm they've caused. The trust that my community, my family, and my city placed in me was broken, and I can never take that back.

I have spent my life serving others, fighting for justice, equality, and the opportunity for every person to have a fair chance. But in a moment of poor judgment, I lost my way. I made decisions that do not reflect the person I strive to be, and for that, I am truly sorry.

Every day, I carry the weight of knowing I betrayed the trust of those who looked up to me. I let down the very people I swore to serve, and I know that I've caused pain. I am not here to ask for forgiveness lightly, but I stand before you to make it clear that I fully accept the consequences of my actions.

Since then, I have reflected deeply on what I have done. I am committed to taking responsibility not only through words but through actions. I've worked to rebuild what was broken, to correct my mistakes, and to continue to serve my community in the ways that I can. I am committed to doing better, and I will continue to prove through my actions that this mistake does not define who I am or what I can still offer.

I am not asking for sympathy. I'm asking for the opportunity to demonstrate that this mistake does not define me. That who I am, who I've always been, is someone who believes in justice, who believes in the power of second chances, and who is ready to continue fighting for what's right — not just for myself, but for all those whose lives I can touch.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

2. Acknowledgment of Charges

Your Honor,

In addition to the remorse I have expressed, I fully acknowledge the charges that have been brought against me. I recognize the severity of my actions, and I take full responsibility for my misconduct.

I understand that my choices were not only wrong but also in violation of the trust that the public and my community placed in me. These actions have caused harm, and I deeply regret the consequences of my decisions.

I acknowledge that I misused my position, and as a result, I am now standing before you to answer for the harm I have caused to the public, the trust placed in me, and the principles of integrity that I failed to uphold. I accept the legal responsibility for my actions and am prepared to face the consequences.

I also understand that this legal process is necessary to address the breach of trust and to ensure accountability. I am committed to facing these charges with the seriousness they deserve and will continue to take responsibility for my past actions. I am fully prepared to accept the outcomes of this process and to move forward in a way that reflects my understanding of the impact of my actions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Introduction: A Lifelong Commitment to Cleveland

Basheer Jones has dedicated his life to **uplifting the Cleveland community**. From his youth to his tenure as a Cleveland City Council member and continuing after his time in office, Basheer has been a **steadfast advocate** for **youth, education, social justice, and civic engagement**. His work in these areas has **positively impacted thousands** of lives over the past two decades.

This document outlines Basheer's long-standing commitment to serving Cleveland and shows the **depth of his positive contributions** over many years. It also acknowledges the charges he faces and provides context for his **personal growth** since the incidents. This document aims to demonstrate that his **long-term service to the community** should be considered in light of the **mistakes made**, and that he remains deeply committed to **community restoration**.

Section 1: Early Community Engagement (1990s - 2007)

1.1 Youth Engagement and Leadership

Basheer's commitment to his community began in his teenage years, when he became involved in **mentorship** and **youth empowerment** programs. At just **12 years old**, Basheer was already participating in the **BRICK Program**, a community initiative designed to teach youth about **leadership** and **community service**. He quickly became a role model and **mentor** for younger students, fostering their growth through activities such as **reading sessions** and **community outreach**.

BRICK Program (1997) -

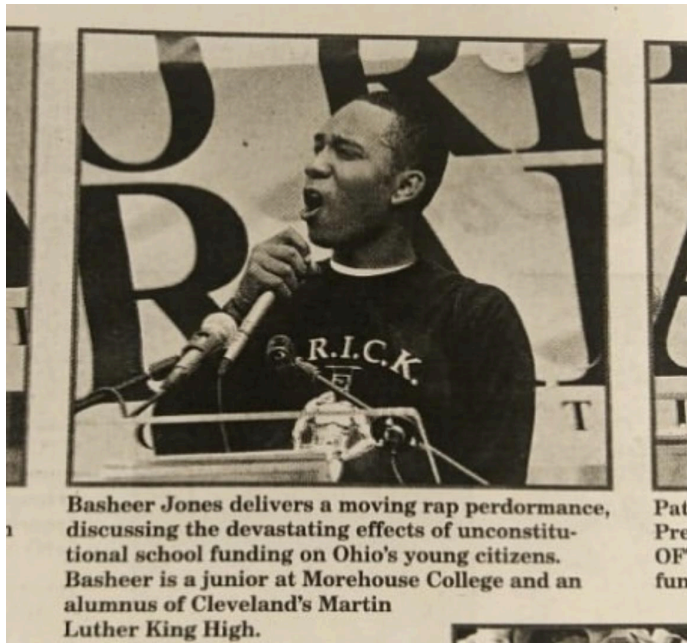


"Basheer Jones, 12, right, and Ladon Johnson, 13, read to students... part of the BRICK program, in which students do community service."

1.2 Rising Star as a Public Advocate and Poet

His poetry and activism provided a voice for those who needed it the most. By high school, Basheer was already known for his **poetry** and **advocacy** in the Cleveland community. As an accomplished **urban poet**, he used his words to raise awareness about **social issues** affecting Cleveland's youth. His ability to speak openly about **poverty**, **violence**, and **racial inequality** made him a respected voice for change in the city.

“Basheer Jones: A Way With Words” (2007) –



"His skills as an urban poet have earned him acclaim throughout the City of Cleveland."

As Basheer's impact on the Cleveland community grew throughout his youth and early adulthood, his passion for **public service** and **advocacy** naturally evolved.

During this time, Basheer was **encouraged** by **Marcia Fudge**, a pivotal figure who saw his potential to make an even greater impact through **politics**. She **transformed his understanding** of public service, teaching him that **political involvement** could be a powerful tool to drive meaningful change. The words she shared with him during this pivotal moment have stayed with him, inspiring his subsequent journey into politics.



Placeholder for Marcia Fudge's Quote:

“_____.” – **Marcia Fudge**, former U.S. Representative, on the importance of politics in driving change.

Section 2: Leadership and Advocacy During His Time as Cleveland City Councilman (2018 - 2022)

2.1 Advocacy for Youth, Education, and Social Justice

During his tenure as a Cleveland City Council member, Basheer Jones became a **champion for youth, education, and social justice**. He led numerous initiatives focused on addressing **educational inequities, advocating for marginalized communities**, and ensuring **access to opportunities** for Cleveland's youth. Basheer was deeply committed to addressing the **barriers** that Cleveland youth face, particularly those from **underrepresented communities**, and worked tirelessly to create programs and policies that would empower these young people to succeed.

Cleveland Youth Empowerment Programs – Basheer worked to provide Cleveland youth with the resources they needed to **excel in education and personal development**. His initiatives included after-school programs, mentorship opportunities, and **youth leadership events** aimed at fostering positive growth and educational achievement.



A significant focus of Basheer's work was the **safety of children** and the **well-being of seniors**. He understood that vacant buildings were more than just eyesores—they were breeding grounds for illegal activity and posed a serious threat to safety. Many children in Cleveland had to walk past these dangerous spaces to get to school, and Basheer took it upon himself to advocate for the demolition of vacant properties. His efforts led to the demolition of **261 vacant buildings**, which not only made neighborhoods safer but also created space for much-needed parks and community centers. These spaces offered safe recreational activities for children, addressing the root causes of youth crime and providing exposure to positive alternatives.

In addition to the demolition of vacant buildings, Basheer was instrumental in advocating for \$15 million in investment for recreation centers, places where young people could go for structured activities, education, and mentorship. He believed that exposure—to recreational outlets, positive mentors, and alternative pathways—was key to reducing youth involvement in crime.

Basheer Jones' leadership as Cleveland City Councilman wasn't only about big investments and development projects—it was about the day-to-day lives of the residents. Throughout his tenure, Basheer was deeply committed to social justice and community empowerment, focusing not just on economic growth but also on ensuring that vulnerable populations had access to the resources and support they needed.

The Tent Protest: Raising Awareness for Street Violence



In 2018, Basheer Jones took a bold stand against the rampant violence in his community following the tragic shooting death of Malik Herring. This devastating loss occurred in the heart of East 79th and Superior, an area already grappling with a history of violence and unrest. Basheer, recognizing the need to call attention to this ongoing crisis, decided to take a dramatic and highly publicized action—he set up a 72-hour vigil, sleeping outside in a tent in the very area where the shooting occurred.

Basheer's decision to camp out for 72 hours was a powerful statement about his commitment to confronting violence head-on. The area where he camped is known for its struggles with crime and poverty, and Basheer wanted to make sure that the community and leaders could no longer ignore the problem. By sleeping on the street, Basheer symbolized the urgency of the situation and the need for action—not just for public awareness, but for immediate intervention.

During the vigil, Basheer invited local residents to join him in conversation, to share their concerns, and to discuss solutions. The event wasn't just about protest but about creating a

space for dialogue. It became an opportunity for the community to come together and have their voices heard, and for Basheer to demonstrate his personal commitment to the cause by taking this sacrifice for his community.

Basheer's vigil was not only a protest against the violence that had taken lives but a call for solidarity—a reminder that change begins when people are actively involved, and leaders are willing to lead by example. The tent protest became a pivotal moment in Basheer's ongoing fight to bring attention to the needs of Cleveland's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Advocacy for Seniors: A Commitment to Care

Basheer's leadership extended to the elderly residents of Cleveland, who often faced additional hardships and challenges. His commitment to senior citizens was evident in his work to ensure their safety, comfort, and sense of community.

Throughout his time in office, Basheer organized numerous community events for seniors, including hot dinners, social gatherings, and winter storm preparations. He was especially attentive during snow storms, when he would reach out to the community to help identify elderly residents who might need assistance with shoveling their walkways—a simple act, but one that meant the world to seniors who were unable to do it themselves.



Senior COVID Party: A Gesture of Compassion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Basheer recognized the particular hardship faced by senior citizens, who were not only vulnerable to the virus but also isolated due to social distancing and lockdowns. In response to the loneliness and isolation that seniors were experiencing, Basheer organized an impromptu “party” to lift their spirits. At a senior apartment complex, he brought a speaker outside, turned it up loud, and encouraged residents to come out onto their balconies to join in the fun.

What started as a simple act of compassion turned into an inspiring moment of unity. Seniors, some of whom hadn’t left their apartments for weeks, came outside to sing and dance, creating an atmosphere of joy and connection in the midst of a difficult time. This event was not just about having a good time—it was about showing the community that despite the pandemic’s constraints, human connection could still be maintained. It was also a reflection of Basheer’s deep empathy for his community, recognizing the unique challenges faced by those who are often forgotten or overlooked.

“Seniors shouldn’t be isolated. They are the backbone of our communities, and I wanted to make sure they knew we were still there for them.”

— Basheer Jones

Basheer has always believed that true leadership requires direct engagement with the community—whether through long-term policy change or immediate action in times of crisis. His 72-hour vigil in the wake of violence and the COVID-19 party for seniors were not isolated acts but a continuation of his commitment to social justice and standing alongside those in need.

2.2 Economic Development and Investment in the Hough Neighborhood

During his time as **Cleveland City Councilman**, Basheer Jones worked tirelessly to support small businesses, encourage economic growth, and revitalize underserved communities, particularly the **Hough neighborhood**. One of his most notable achievements was bringing **notable investments** into the area through partnerships with organizations like **The Cleveland Foundation**, **MAGNET Cleveland**, and others.

While Basheer's actions during times of immediate need, like the vigil and senior outreach, demonstrate his hands-on approach, his work in economic development is no less significant. As a councilman, he tackled the systemic issues that contribute to the challenges his community faces, turning his vision into real-world change.

2.3 Mobilizing for Social Justice

Basheer was a powerful voice for **racial justice** and **social equity** during his time as a Cleveland City Council member. He organized numerous **community rallies**, participated in **voter registration drives**, and was **vocally supportive** of initiatives aimed at addressing **systemic racism** in Cleveland. Basheer's passion for **social justice** and **civic engagement** was reflected in his work to bring **greater visibility** to issues such as **police reform**, **equal housing access**, and **racial inequality** in Cleveland.



"Basheer Jones was a tireless advocate for racial equality in Cleveland, ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities were heard."

Basheer's role in economic development is not just about infrastructure—it's about creating opportunities for individuals and families to thrive.

This commitment extends to his work in criminal justice reform, highlighted by his tireless efforts to advocate for Mike Sutton, a man wrongfully convicted and whose release was secured thanks to Basheer's perseverance.

Advocacy for Justice: The Case of Mike Sutton



One of the most defining moments in Basheer Jones' career, both as a **community advocate** and a **public servant**, was his tireless work in securing justice for **Mike Sutton**, a man who was wrongfully convicted and spent nearly **two decades** in prison for a crime he did not commit.

The Injustice: A Life Cut Short

Mike Sutton was just **18 years old** when he was wrongfully accused and convicted of a crime he did not commit, months before he was set to start college on a **full scholarship**. Instead of pursuing his education and future, Mike's life was derailed by a **false conviction**, and he spent **15 years in prison** for a crime he did not commit. During these years, his bright future and dreams were stolen, and his prospects for success were cut short.

Basheer Jones' Role: A Commitment to Justice

Basheer Jones, even after his time as a councilman, never wavered in his commitment to fight for justice for those wrongfully convicted. When Mike Sutton's case came to light, Basheer became a crucial figure in the **advocacy for his exoneration**. Basheer understood that the criminal justice system had failed Mike and many others like him—and he refused to stand by while an innocent man suffered.

Basheer worked **closely with Mike's legal team**, gathering information, rallying support from the community, and bringing attention to the **flaws in the original case** that had led to Mike's wrongful conviction. Through relentless **advocacy**, **investigative work**, and collaboration with others who believed in Mike's innocence, Basheer helped to **prove Mike Sutton's innocence**, resulting in Mike's **release from prison** after nearly two decades of wrongful imprisonment.

The Outcome: A Life Restored

In **2021**, after years of legal battles, **Mike Sutton was exonerated** and released from prison, a moment that marked a significant victory in the fight for justice. Mike's life, once derailed by a flawed system, was restored, and his wrongful conviction was overturned. This case not only represents the triumph of truth over injustice but also serves as a testament to the power of **community advocacy** and the **influence one individual** —Basheer Jones—can have on bringing about meaningful change.

This event demonstrated **Basheer's deep commitment to criminal justice reform**, his willingness to take on difficult battles for those who have been wronged, and his belief in the power of **second chances**. By advocating for Mike's exoneration, Basheer was not only fighting for one man's freedom but also working to address the systemic injustices that affect so many across this country.

"Mike Sutton's case isn't just about one man. It's about the many who are suffering in silence, caught in the gears of a justice system that often fails them. This victory is for all of them. This

fight was never just about Mike—it was about making sure that no one else has to endure the same pain."

— Basheer Jones

Even after stepping down from his role as a Cleveland City Council member, Basheer's commitment to his community remained unwavering. His legacy of **service** did not end with his tenure in office; instead, he continued to engage in meaningful work through both **mentorship programs** and **social justice advocacy**. Whether it was leading **youth programs**, continuing his **voter engagement efforts**, or speaking out on issues of **social justice**, Basheer has shown that his dedication to Cleveland is **ongoing** and **unwavering**.

Section 3: Continuing Community Engagement After Public Office (2023 - Present)

3.1 Ongoing Mentorship and Community Programs

After leaving public office, Basheer has continued his **commitment to the community** through ongoing initiatives. He has remained involved in **voter mobilization**, **youth mentorship**, and **advocacy for marginalized communities**.

3.2 Elite Travel Company: Empowering Youth Through Education

After stepping down from the city council, Basheer continued his dedication to uplifting Cleveland's youth through his nonprofit, Elite Travel Company. Since its founding in 2021, Elite Travel Company has sent over **500 students on college tours**, with a focus on exposing students—particularly African American youth—to higher education, especially at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). These tours aim to open students' minds to the possibilities of higher education, providing them with the resources and inspiration needed to pursue their dreams.



As a nonprofit organization, Elite Travel Company operates with the mission of creating a deeper connection to education and providing life-changing experiences for students who might not have otherwise had access to such opportunities. The company is designed to be more than just a college tour provider; it's a vehicle for empowerment, helping young people see their own potential and motivating them to pursue their academic and personal goals. The Elite Travel Company believes

that education is the key to breaking cycles of poverty and creating opportunities for young people in the Black community.

3.2 National Campaign Tour with Presidential Candidate - Dr. Cornel West

Basheer's advocacy for justice and his dedication to empowering communities is not just a recent development; it's a journey that has been deeply shaped by years of mentorship from prominent figures in the social justice movement. One of the most influential figures in Basheer's life has been Cornel West, a renowned philosopher, author, and social activist.



Their relationship spans decades, with Basheer first meeting Cornel West during his youth, when Basheer was inspired by Cornel's work and leadership. Over the years, their bond has grown stronger, with Basheer following in Cornel's footsteps as a leader in the fight for racial equality and justice.

Basheer Jones with Cornel West during his youth—early days of mentorship and inspiration.



In 2024, Basheer joined Cornel West's national presidential campaign tour, where they traveled together across the country to mobilize voters, advocate for social justice reform, and inspire change. The national tour focused on voter empowerment, racial justice, and the importance of grassroots activism. Basheer worked alongside Cornel West to engage communities of color, advocating for political engagement and civic participation.

Photo: “Basheer Jones and Cornel West on the national campaign tour—continuing the fight for justice together.”

3.2 Boots on the Ground with 1,000 Black Men (2024)

In **2024**, Basheer launched the “**Boots on the Ground with 1,000 Black Men**” event, a **voter mobilization and civic engagement initiative** aimed at **increasing voter participation** and engaging Cleveland's **Black community** in meaningful social change. This event was not only a direct extension of Basheer's previous **advocacy work** but also served as a reminder of the importance of **active participation** in civic processes.

Key Event: The “Boots on the Ground” initiative was a **2024 rally** that brought together hundreds of Cleveland’s Black men to advocate for voter participation and social justice reform.

- Photo Placeholder**: [Insert photo from “Boots on the Ground with 1,000 Black Men” event]

Section 4: Additional Contributions - Writing and Public Speaking

In addition to his **public service** and **advocacy**, Basheer has also made significant contributions as a **writer** and **public speaker**. His published works, such as “**I’ll Speak for Change**”, have allowed him to continue advocating for social justice and community empowerment in a more personal, impactful manner. He has also been a featured speaker at dozens of **high school graduations**, where he shares his story of **resilience** and **dedication** to youth and education.

“I’ll Speak for Change” – A book written by Basheer that emphasizes the importance of **youth empowerment** and **community service**.

Public Speaking: Basheer continues to speak at **graduation ceremonies** and **youth mentorship events**, encouraging the next generation to strive for success and be active in their communities.

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Section 5 The Legacy of Advocacy: A Family's Commitment to Change

A continuation of Basheer Jones's advocacy work lives on through his children, as they actively carry forward the values of justice, community empowerment, and social change that he has dedicated his life to. Basheer's commitment to activism has never been about personal accolades or recognition, but about ensuring that the causes he has championed continue to thrive through the next generation.

His children, deeply influenced by his example, have been an active part of his work—whether through direct involvement in community programs, public events, or advocacy for social justice causes. They have learned from Basheer that true change doesn't just happen by speaking about it—it happens by showing up, working hard, and leading by example.

The values Basheer has instilled in his children have been reflected in their own involvement in various community-building initiatives. From advocating for youth programs and environmental justice to participating in policy discussions about the future of Cleveland, they understand that the fight for social equity must be carried forward, not only for themselves but for future generations.

Fighting for clean air in Ohio means opposing House Bill 201: Asalé Jones, Faye Moledina and Ivey Williams

Published: Nov. 22, 2023, 5:08 a.m.



A powerful example of this is Asale Jones's advocacy in 2023, where she took a strong stance against House Bill 201 in her op-ed for Cleveland.com. The bill threatened to weaken critical environmental protections, particularly for communities already vulnerable to the effects of pollution. Asale passionately argued that the bill would negatively impact the health and well-being of those who are most susceptible to environmental harm—communities already burdened with air and water pollution. Her work reflects the same commitment to justice her father has demonstrated throughout his career: standing

up for those without a voice, advocating for policies that protect the marginalized, and ensuring that our environmental policies prioritize health and equity.

Asale's involvement in this effort was deeply personal—she has lived in Cleveland long enough to see how environmental pollution affects the health of her community. Her call for clean air was not just an issue of policy, but a matter of public health, equity, and justice.

Her activism is an extension of Basheer's long-standing commitment to community empowerment, as it reflects the same drive to hold those in power accountable and to advocate for marginalized communities. This is just one example of how the values Basheer instilled in his children continue to guide their actions in the fight for a better future.



Basheer's other children have also played an active role in his work, participating in youth initiatives, social justice programs, and community organizing. Their involvement demonstrates how Basheer's mission is not a solitary one but a shared effort that extends beyond his own work, growing through the commitment of his family.

Photo: "Basheer's son Asaf Jones with Cornel West during their national presidential campaign tour"

Basheer's work has had a real impact on Cleveland. During his time as a councilman, he helped bring over \$700 million in investments into the Hough neighborhood, demolished 261 vacant buildings, created new parks, and revitalized recreation centers. His children have witnessed firsthand how community revitalization, youth empowerment, and economic justice can transform neighborhoods. They are now stepping into roles where they continue that work, understanding that advocacy is a constant effort, not just a one-time act.

Basheer's influence is ongoing. As his children step into leadership roles, they carry forward the work he began, applying their own voices and actions to the issues that matter most. His work is not over—it continues through them, ensuring that the fight for social justice and equity lives on.

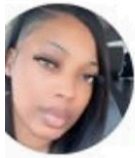
"The work doesn't stop with me," Basheer says. "My children are the future of this fight. They're going to carry it on in ways I can't even imagine."

Section 6: Testimonials and Public Recognition

Basheer's work in the community has earned him respect and admiration from those around him. Below are testimonials from individuals who have been positively impacted by his leadership,



basheerj 



durnishaaj commented: My 8th grade graduation at warrensville and boy did you make me cry!!! You was speaking some real stuff im 25 now and I remember it yesterday speaking about poverty life and how fathers aren't in their kids lives and that right there made me cry all graduation 😭 alot of those kids from the suburbs they had their fathers there but a little dtw girl like me have experienced it all with no father in her life! I pray you become mayor you deserve it love you for life 💙👁️🙏 11m

 Reply





basheerj 



U never spoke at a school I went too .
But u did help my family when my 11
year old nephew Sirr Moore passed 2
years ago . He drowned in a tragic
accident at a pool party . U even stop
by my sisters house to give your
condolences and pray for our family .
Thank you





basheerj 

...

I first seen you speak at my cousin graduation 2009 Whitney Young. You were talking about how life is a marathon and not a sprint. You also spoke on the people that will try to meet you at the finish line but they wasn't there to give you water during the water. That message always stuck with me.



basheerj

...



ladybug_sav_7 At my cousins
[@simplyindiabreanna](#) 8th grade graduation we were 13 I believe...you have kept up with all of us ever since then...and when I was in the 9th and 10th grade when they had the big seminar at CSU (also that same year you came to my school just to come and I dragged you in my classroom so that my class could see you again because they asked about all the time 😂😂) I am 23 now and you have always had an impact on my life I'll never forget when I worked the campaign with you and we stayed for the watch party!



44m Pinned 2 likes Reply Message



jaythewriter24 Both in the classroom my 11TH grade year and at my high school graduation. I remember how important the words "Set an example that your grandparents would be proud of" was to me it's been 10 years since then and I still hold on to that



10m Reply Message



basheerj



tall_britt 10th grade if I can remember!
Collinwood HS. I'm 29 now!! Been rocking with
you every since 🙌🙌🙌



5h 2 likes Reply Message



his_quietstorm_714 You didn't speak at mine
but you caught attention when spoke at My
Daughter's....MLK c/o 2012 and now she has
her BSN ❤️❤️❤️🙌🙌🙌🙌🙌



2h 1 like Reply Message



allkreativeprinting Wow this is amazing!



5h 1 like Reply Message



hoggrennee_ Spoke at our graduation and on
peer mediation day.. I went to the Cleveland
Browns Jr Sports League at 14 thanks to you
too ❤️❤️



5h 1 like Reply Message



basheerj



bigbzzzjay pva 4th grade mr Robert had the brick program



2h 1 like Reply Message



nataashaaa___ Class of 2010 John Adams HS Graduation



4h 1 like Reply Message



2tone_sopretty East tech 9th grade I'm 30 now



5h 1 like Reply Message



kaynichele_ Spoke to my 8th grade class at woodland academy. I'm 21 now.



5h 1 like Reply Message



_preciousssa Class of 2015 Graduation at Tric East For Martin Luther King Jr. High School.




5h 1 like Reply Message



basheerj 

...

You spoke at my graduation in 2021 lol I'll be 18 next week but the first time I ever heard you speak I was 16 years old only 2 speakers ever in my life caught my eye and I've been spoken to so much the impact you've made on me is something that's indescribable I had to tell my parents we all love you so much keep doing what you do great things will come Mr.Jones 



basheerj



Yes! You came to the call and post and talked to young women I'm not sure what age I was, but your words of wisdom, grace, and great story teller was something so amazing that I would always remember. I was happy to grow up and be able to vote for you. I am 25 years old now and I am an educator, have worked in 3 schools, have volunteered and mentored many but more young black girls. I am also now serving in the Air Force, I have my Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology and Sociology with a Psychology minor and Public Policy concentration. I am hoping to one day get into more politics myself or be where you are. Thank you for all you do!

